

The Village of Elmwood Park has adopted the Elmwood Park Station Area Plan to facilitate redevelopment opportunities and facility improvements near the Elmwood Park Metra Station. In particular, the Village wants to focus on transit-oriented development that provides a mix of commercial, residential, and public uses within a pedestrian-friendly street environment and a short walk to the station. The main purpose of the Station Area Plan is to spur new investment that fosters a mixed-use downtown and increases transit use of the Elmwood Park Metra Station, as well as Pace and CTA bus service.

Using resources from the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA), the Village engaged HNTB Corporation and Goodman Williams Group to provide planning and market services, create implementation strategies, and formalize the Station Area Plan. The station area is defined by a convenient walking distance from the station, which is typically measured by a five to ten minute walk, or a one-quarter mile to one-half mile walk. More specifically, the Village wants to focus on improving its commercial district on Grand Avenue and its connections with Conti Parkway.

In the first phase of the planning process, the Inventory and Analysis Memorandum documented the Village's existing conditions and planning opportunities. The existing conditions analysis included a review of planning documents and land use and transportation conditions. In addition, a market assessment was completed to document near-term market demand and development opportunities over the next ten years. The Village reviewed and approved these documents in December 2005 as the baseline data to create alternative concepts for the Station Area Plan. Both documents are available under separate cover.

In the second phase, a draft Alternatives and Analysis Memorandum documented two alternative concept plans that were created to highlight redevelopment options based on a moderate reinvestment and a high reinvestment focus. These alternative concept plans were analyzed in comparison to the Village's overall vision and planning principles, the near-term market demand, a business district survey, and a redevelopment costs overview analysis. After a public presentation and discussion, the Village chose the high reinvestment concept as the Preferred Concept Plan for implementation purposes.

The final phase of the planning process provides the content for the majority of this Station Area Plan. The Village considered and discussed the Preferred Concept Plan in relation to a land use



framework plan, a circulation and access plan, design guidelines, and implementation strategies. Ultimately, the Elmwood Park Station Area Plan is meant only as a guide for the Village and provides flexibility to accommodate real development proposals that can help create a vibrant downtown and improved Metra Station area.

Importantly, the Elmwood Park Station Area Plan incorporates the feedback of numerous stakeholders and the public. A Technical Advisory Committee provided oversight of the planning process, and consisted of Village officials and personnel and transportation experts from the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA), Metra, and Pace. Key person interviews were also conducted to gain in-depth knowledge and opinions from a range of Elmwood Park residents. In addition, a business survey was conducted for Grand Avenue business owners to determine their opinions about the future of the business district. Finally, three public meetings were held for Village residents to provide input during the process.

Community Background

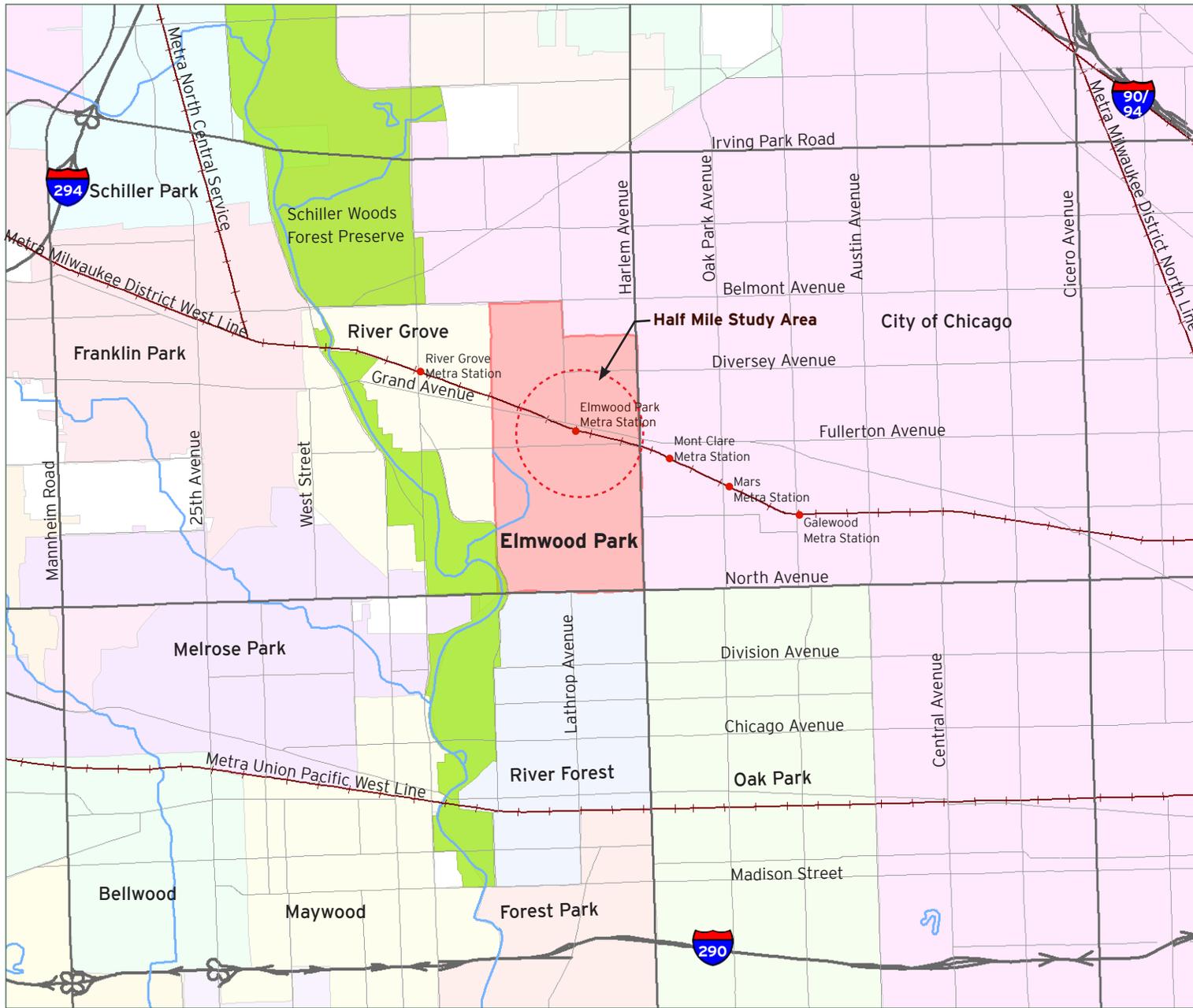
The Village of Elmwood Park was incorporated in 1914, and has 25,405 residents (2000 Census). The community borders the City of Chicago to the east along Harlem Avenue, and is two square miles in area. Significantly, Elmwood Park has a reputation as a multi-generational community, meaning that grandparents, parents, and children live in close proximity and know their neighbors. Grand and Harlem Avenues, which served as a regional downtown for almost 50 years, was accessed by trains, trolleys, buses, and cars, making it a destination for the western suburbs and the City of Chicago. However, as with many downtowns over the last generation, suburban malls drew businesses away from the downtown. For several years, Elmwood Park has focused on reviving Grand and Harlem Avenues, and seeks to use this Station Area Plan as a “road map” for additional development within the station area to help its revitalization efforts.

The Village of Elmwood Park is one of Chicago’s inner-ring suburbs, located only 10 miles west of the Loop. Figure 1: Vicinity Map, on the following page, highlights important regional features that surround the Village of Elmwood Park. Figure 1 also highlights the boundaries of the station area, which generally encompasses a one-half mile radius surrounding the Elmwood Park Metra Station.



FIGURE 1
Vicinity Map

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STATION AREA PLAN
VILLAGE OF ELMWOOD PARK, IL

A. TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES

The Preferred Concept Plan is based upon the principles of transit-oriented development (TOD), reflecting the Village's desire to strengthen the connection between the Grand Avenue business district and the existing transit amenities that serve as a key community asset in Elmwood Park. Understanding these TOD principles is especially important in Elmwood Park, because the business district along Grand Avenue has become auto-oriented, and future development patterns within the station should emphasize a pedestrian environment.

The general principles of TOD can be described succinctly within three broad categories, or the "Three D's" of transit-oriented development – Design, Diversity and Density. TOD areas are generally considered to be within a ten-minute walk or one-half (1/2) mile of a public transit facility, with most uses concentrated within a five-minute walk or one-quarter (1/4) mile. One-half mile is considered an acceptable walking distance for most people, and therefore encompasses the area in which the physical planning advantages of TOD can be best utilized.

Design

- Inter-modal connections and amenities should be considered and accommodated, to facilitate the use of all modes of transportation, including walking, biking, driving, and bus transit. Visibility and ease of access to the station are especially important.
- Preference for pedestrians and bicyclists should be considered in the design of roadways, sidewalks, and other pathways throughout a TOD area. While automobile and bus access is important, the comfort and safety of pedestrians is paramount.
- Shared commuter parking facilities (utilized for parking by residents or businesses during off-peak hours) and reduced off-street parking for shoppers and residents should be incorporated. Local residents who commute to work by train typically do not own as many vehicles per household, and commuters can provide additional support for retailers.

Diversity

- Mixed uses and varied housing types are important aspects of a TOD area. Integrating retail, commercial, office and residential uses in close proximity to transit and one another provides a "synergy" between uses, reduces vehicle trips generated within the area, and allows for compact development. Mixed uses can occur within individual buildings and within the



overall area.

- Public facilities and spaces should be integrated into the TOD area, so that it is truly a community-wide activity center, expanding beyond retail and commercial service functions.
- Market-driven development is a key consideration within the TOD area, so as to serve and attract more than just commuters. Local resident needs are also important. Commuters alone will not sustain the desired retail and commercial services in the area.

Density

- Higher density uses are appropriate closest to transit facilities, where their impact on single family residential neighborhoods can be minimized and their reduced off-street parking needs can be effectively incorporated into site design.
- Balance higher densities with open spaces and/or plazas within the TOD area, to provide areas of respite and visual variety, and offer open space amenities to residents of higher density residential areas.
- Residents within the TOD area provide valuable support to local businesses, but cannot alone sustain retail and commercial service uses desired by the community at large.



B. PLANNING BACKGROUND

The planning context for the Station Area Plan included previous plans, existing land use conditions and regulations, existing transportation conditions, and a detailed market assessment. Using the planning context as baseline data, the Station Area Plan responds to existing issues and opportunities, while fulfilling community aspirations to the greatest extent feasible.

Official Comprehensive Plan

The Village adopted its Official Comprehensive Plan in June 1995. The most relevant land use issues documented in the Comprehensive Plan include: protection of existing single-family neighborhoods; creating a balance between single and multiple family units; limitation of higher densities with multiple family areas with inappropriate facilities; and, improving the future tax base by adding commercial businesses along Grand Avenue.

Zoning Ordinance

The Village adopted its current zoning ordinance on June 26, 1972, and has amended the ordinance fourteen times through August 31, 2004. Fundamentally, zoning helps to prevent conflicting land uses and promotes orderly development. The station area encompasses seven zoning districts, including four residential districts, two business districts, and a mixed-use district. The location of zoning districts is depicted in Figure 2: Existing Zoning. Future zoning amendments in this area should be guided by the recommendations of the Station Area Plan.

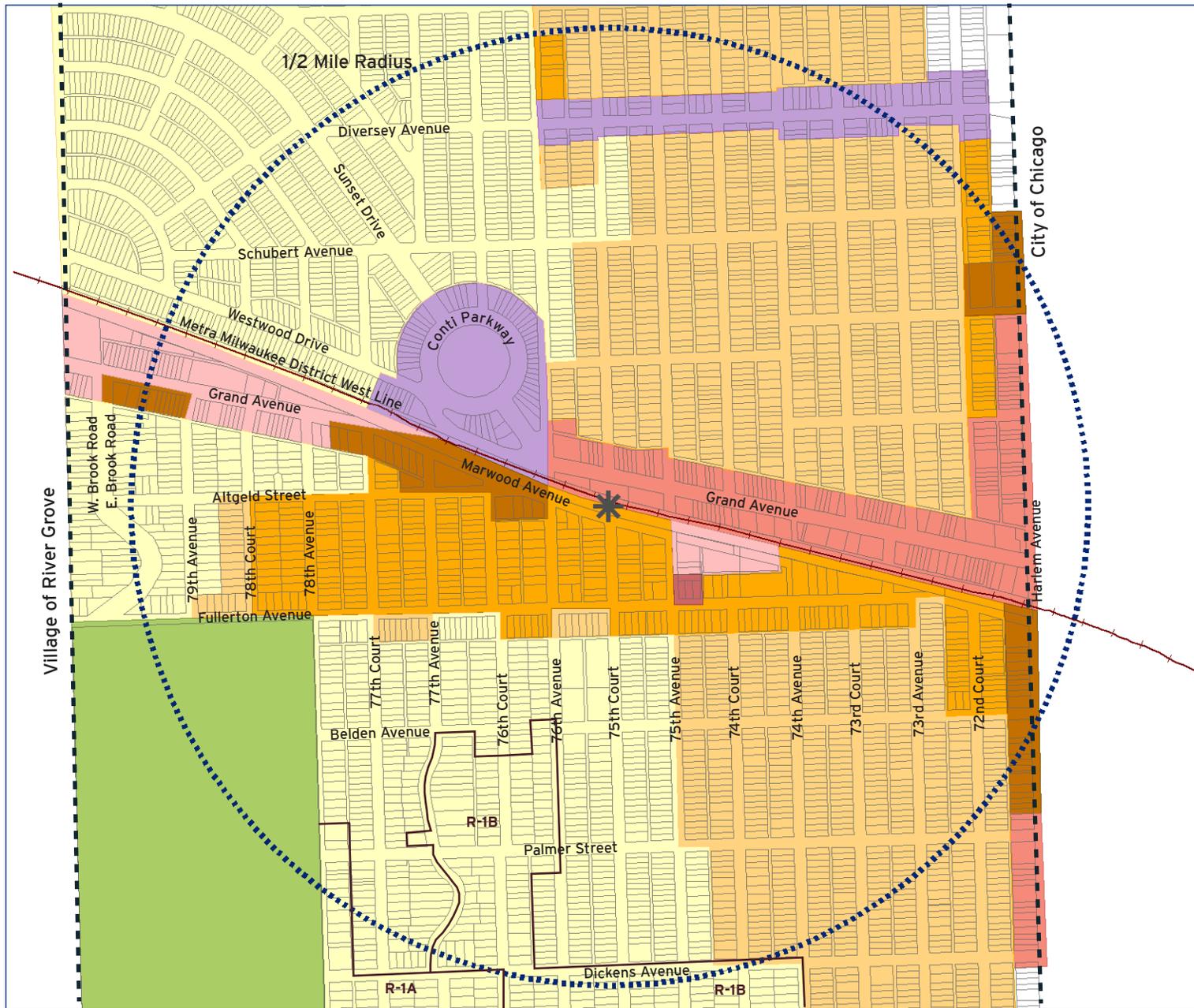
Existing Land Use Conditions

Understanding existing land use conditions is a necessary first step in planning for future conditions. A land use inventory of the station area was completed in August 2005, and is depicted in Figure 3: Existing Land Use. The majority of the station area consists of well-maintained single-family residential uses. Various multi-family residential uses are in scattered locations and in a concentrated area between Grand and Fullerton Avenues. A mix of commercial retail, service, and restaurant uses, office uses, industrial uses, and multi-family uses are located along Grand and Harlem Avenues and Conti Parkway, which also includes several institutional uses.



FIGURE 2
Existing Zoning

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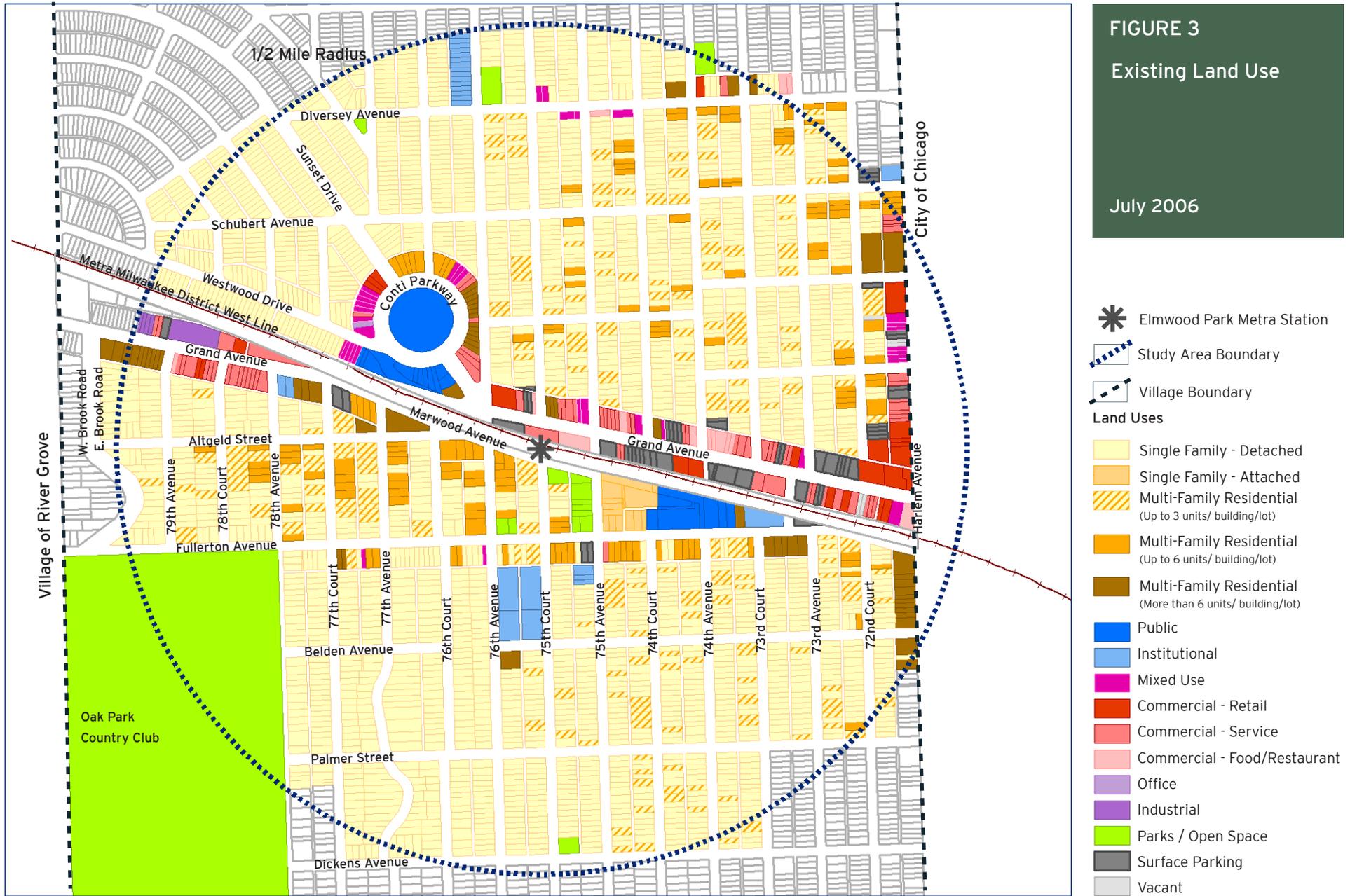


- Elmwood Park Metra Station
- Study Area Boundary
- Village Boundary
- R-1: Single Family Detached Residence
- R-2: Two Family/ Three Family Residence
- R-3 General Residence
- R-4: General Residence
- B-1: Neighborhood Business
- B-2: General Business
- C-1: General Commercial
- MU-1: Mixed Use
- COS: Conservation and Open Space



FIGURE 3
Existing Land Use

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- Elmwood Park Metra Station
- Study Area Boundary
- Village Boundary
- Land Uses**
- Single Family - Detached
- Single Family - Attached
- Multi-Family Residential (Up to 3 units/ building/lot)
- Multi-Family Residential (Up to 6 units/ building/lot)
- Multi-Family Residential (More than 6 units/ building/lot)
- Public
- Institutional
- Mixed Use
- Commercial - Retail
- Commercial - Service
- Commercial - Food/Restaurant
- Office
- Industrial
- Parks / Open Space
- Surface Parking
- Vacant



Existing Transportation Conditions

The Village's existing transportation conditions are illustrated in Figure 4: Transit, Access and Circulation. The most significant transportation resources include the Elmwood Park Metra Station, Pace and CTA bus service, two major arterial roadways, and pedestrian-friendly streets.

Elmwood Park is served by Metra commuter rail on its Milwaukee District West Line providing service between Chicago Union Station and Elgin Big Timber Road Station. The Elmwood Park Metra Station is located near Grand Avenue at the 75th Court intersection. On weekdays, 21 inbound trains to Chicago arrive at Elmwood Park Metra Station and 23 outbound trains arrive from Chicago. According to Metra's fall 2002 Boarding/Alighting Counts, 345 riders boarded inbound trains to Chicago and 374 riders alighted outbound trains from Chicago on a typical weekday. Significantly, 43% of Elmwood Park commuters drove alone and 40% walked to the station, while Metra's system-wide average was 54% for driving alone and 21% for walking (Fall 2002 Metra Origin-Destination Survey).

Bus service to the Village is provided by Pace and the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA). Two Pace bus routes, Routes 307 and 319, pass through the Village providing service to its Metra station from the surrounding neighborhoods. Besides the fixed route services, Pace also operates para-transit services for the elderly and the disabled during its regular service hours. The CTA also operates two bus routes in the vicinity of the station area, Routes 90 and Route 65.

Two major arterial roadways, Grand and Harlem Avenues, pass through the Village carrying large volumes of regional traffic. Harlem Avenue, also designated as Illinois Route 43, is a north-south arterial carrying an average daily traffic of 22,400 vehicles north of Grand Avenue (IDOT 2003 traffic counts). Grand Avenue traverses through the Village carrying an average daily traffic of 26,300 vehicles (IDOT 2003). Grand and Harlem Avenues both carry significant volumes of regional and local traffic.

The Elmwood Park Metra Station is easily accessible by both automobile and pedestrian traffic from south of the railroad. However, access from the north is more difficult due to heavy traffic on Grand Avenue and limited signalized intersections. Most residential streets within the station area are pedestrian-friendly with well maintained sidewalks and street trees. Grand Avenue is not pedestrian-friendly due to the presence of auto-oriented retailers, multiple curb cuts and the lack of pedestrian amenities.



FIGURE 4
Transit, Access and Circulation
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- Signalized Intersection
- Elmwood Park Metra Station
- Study Area Boundary
- Village Boundary
- Railroad
- Arterial Roadways
- Collector Roadways
- Pace Bus Routes
- CTA Bus Routes
- One Way Street
- Commuter Parking (139 spaces, including 5 accessible)



C. MARKET ASSESSMENT

The following development program summarizes the key market assessment findings for the Elmwood Park Station Area. The complete results may be found in a separate report prepared by Goodman Williams Group – Station Area Market Assessment, Village of Elmwood Park (December 2005). The Preferred Concept Plan directly responds to this market-based development program.

Transit-Oriented Retail

Over the next ten years, there is potential demand for roughly 30,000 square feet of net additional retail along Grand Avenue. Demand would most likely be expressed as neighborhood convenience uses such as coffee shops, bakeries, sandwich shops, specialty food stores, and gift shops near the train station. Besides retail businesses, personal services such as dry cleaners, salons, and shoe repair could add another 5,000 to 10,000 square feet of net new commercial space along Grand Avenue. *Table 1* provides examples of the types of neighborhood-serving retailers that would be appropriate in Elmwood Park, as well as typical building space requirements. Ideally, the businesses would represent a mix of chains and independent businesses.

Table 1: Examples of Neighborhood-Serving Retailers			
Category	Retailer Examples	Square Feet	
		Minimum	Maximum
Sandwich Shops	Quizno's	1,400	1,600
Coffee Shops	Starbuck's	1,000	2,000
Specialty Food	Bakery	1,000	2,000
Shipping	UPS Store	800	1,800
Video	Blockbuster	2,500	4,000
Electronics	Radio Shack	1,000	5,000
Hair / Nail Salons	Local	1,000	2,000
Cosmetics/Body Care Fragrance	Local	1,000	2,000
Apparel / Accessories	Local	1,500	2,000
Dry Cleaner	Local	500	1,500
Shoe Repair	Local	500	1,500

Source: Goodman Williams Group



Grand and Harlem Avenue Retail

Large-format retail opportunities, such as Circuit City, are limited near the Grand and Harlem Avenue intersection. The proximity of national retailers at The Brickyard (about one mile east) and the Harlem Irving Plaza (two miles north) will make it difficult to attract new anchor tenants at Grand and Harlem Avenues.

Elmwood Park should consider the potential to relocate an existing large-format business, Super Low Foods. This food market is located on a small site, and its owners have expressed interest in expansion. Another potential for Grand and Harlem sites could be a mixed-use development with ground-floor retail and upper-story residential.

Redevelopment constraints due to small parcels and multiple ownership at the Grand and Harlem Avenue intersection will require additional efforts by the Village in order to attract new development. A tax increment finance (TIF) district was adopted for this area in 1983, which allowed the Village to assemble parcels and attract Circuit City. Since then, the private market has not reacted by proposing any additional redevelopment projects. Although parcel assembly is a challenging process, the Village may need to undertake this effort for the south side of Grand Avenue, between Harlem and 73rd Avenues, to facilitate private sector interest. Further, unless an extension is sought through the state legislature, the Grand and Harlem Avenues TIF district designation will expire on January 1, 2013.

Residential Development

Due to a strong demand for new housing, additional residential development could be accommodated along Grand Avenue. Depending on the location and site characteristics, residential development could take the form of condominium buildings, condominiums above retail, or townhouses. Over the next 10 years, the market demand is likely to support an annual average of 10-12 units per year, for a total of 100-120 new units.

